BOLIVIA: Military Consolidating Takeover

Army Commander Garcia Meza is consolidating his hold on the government and is moving to eliminate any resistance. [redacted]

The coup on Thursday was carefully planned by the most senior generals and carried out in stages. Civilian resistance has been spotty thus far, largely because the military had rounded up opposition leaders before the takeover. Had resistance been heavy in any city, the high command was prepared to abandon the coup attempt. [redacted]

Socialist Party leader Marcelo Quiroga reportedly was killed during a shootout and labor leader Juan Lechin was badly beaten. This unprovoked violence may provide the catalyst for a civilian reaction. The powerful miners' union, a Lechin stronghold, is the most likely to oppose the military takeover with force. The generals plan next to exile President Gueiler and her cabinet, outlaw all leftist parties, and suspend labor union activity. [redacted]

General Garcia Meza is boasting privately of financial support from Brazil, Argentina, and unidentified Arab sources to offset the loss of US aid. Argentine officials reportedly have been advising the Bolivian military and security agencies since the start of the coup, but there currently is no evidence of other outside support. [redacted]

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